



**This Week in Terminal**    **September 22, 2006**  
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**Hearing Defends FAA's Controller Staffing,  
Praises Safety Record**

(Source: ATO Online)

Sept. 21 - Air traffic control staffing levels are not jeopardizing safety, lawmakers and aviation experts said during a congressional hearing yesterday.

"No accidents have been caused by controller staffing shortages or controller fatigue," Thomas Haueter of the National Transportation Safety Board told the House of Representative's Transportation Aviation Subcommittee hearing on the FAA's safety record.

The hearing came just weeks after the Comair plane crash in Lexington, Ky., that killed 49 people. Although the hearing was scheduled before the tragedy, controller staffing at Lexington's Blue Grass Airport and wider staffing questions were a major issues in the proceedings. Critics have attacked the FAA for having only one controller on duty at Lexington at the time of the accident.

However, Republican Rep. Robin Hayes of North Carolina – a pilot – stressed the lone controller at Lexington was not responsible for the crash, and indeed it isn't necessary to have two controllers in an airport tower for aviation to be safe. "It was not the controller's fault, it was not the FAA's fault," he said.

Likewise, Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Rep. John Mica of Florida pointed out there are over 140 commercial airports that have no tower controllers at all but function perfectly safely.

Mica cautioned against apportioning blame for the Comair accident while the NTSB investigation was still ongoing. He also pointedly criticized attempts to capitalize on the tragedy.

"It is unfortunate that some have used the tragic Comair accident as a way to forward their own agenda. ... It is not in very good taste," Mica said. "Second-guessing is not only inappropriate, it is uncalled for."

The ranking member of the subcommittee, Rep. Jerry Costello of Illinois – who had called for the safety hearing – strongly denied that any Democrat was using the Comair tragedy for political purposes, but stressed the staffing question needed to be addressed.

However, Mica defended the FAA's record on staffing, noting it has been "ramping up" its hiring in anticipation of a wave of controllers retiring in the next few years.

Nick Sabatini, the FAA's associate administrator for aviation safety, highlighted the agency's comprehensive staffing plan that targets hiring 12,000 new controllers in the next eight years to meet dynamic air traffic demand. "The hiring has been going on at a brisk pace," he said. The FAA has already hired nearly 1,000 new controllers this year and is expected to add over another 1,100 next year.

Despite the Comair tragedy, the nation remains "in the midst of the safest period in aviation history," said Sabatini. "By no means do I want to downplay the Kentucky incident, but it must be put into the context so the flying public understands that our system is safe. In fact

pilots are safer on-the-job than when they are not at work.”

Mica complimented the FAA’s “remarkable” safety record in the last few years that has gone hand-in-hand with improvements in efficiency.

Mica highlighted the benefits of TRACON consolidation and the expansion of the contract tower program. “Due to improvements in technology, the FAA is able to consolidate TRACONs that are located close to one another and whose separate operation is highly inefficient. The benefits of TRACON consolidation include reducing controller workload, decreasing facility overhead staffing requirements, and enhancing safety and efficiency within the system.”

Similarly, the contract tower program’s safety and efficiency record has been “validated numerous times,” he added.

Costello also recognized the FAA’s excellent safety record but cautioned that “we must not become complacent about our success.”

Likewise Haueter, the NTSB’s deputy director of aviation safety, said, “We must continue to find ways to make this very safe system safer.”

Sabatini agreed, reiterating throughout the hearing that “system safety is about continuous improvement.

## ETSA News

### BOS Recognized by MPA

(Source: Toni Dusseault, Acting Operations Manager, BOS ATCT)

On September 12, 2006, Boston Tower received an award from the Massachusetts Port Authority CEO, Tom Kinton. The nomination was submitted by the Fire-Rescue Department at Logan Airport.

Below is a summary of the award. MPA Chief Donahue expressed his gratitude to this facility for the spirit of cooperation we display in making Logan a safer more efficient airport.

Fire-Rescue recognizes the efforts of the FAA Boston Air Traffic Control Tower (BOS) team in supporting the ideals of improving public safety and emergency response. Under the leadership of Air Traffic Manager Bettina Peronti, BOS embraced a more proactive and collaborative philosophy and approach. Over the recent years, Fire-Rescue and BOS have designed and implemented a number of improvement initiatives:

- **Aircraft Emergency Frequency-** Designed to link the pilot and ground emergency services under the direction of FAA to improve information flow and emergency operations. This initiative resulted in a national model.
- **Joint Training-Fire-Rescue and BOS** conduct joint training programs including radio communications, team briefings, etc.
- **Shadow Program-Controllers and Fire** personnel “ride along-shadow” each other in an effort to raise levels of situational awareness and better understand respective operations.
- **In-flight Emergency Operations-Revised** Fire-Rescue airfield hold positions to lessen the number of runway crossings and to achieve faster response and more efficient tactical operations. Emergency operations plan, including Fire-Rescue hold positions for each runway, have been automated and integrated into the BOS information display system.

## Operational Errors (OEs)

For this reporting period, the Terminal Service Area is .9 % over our pacing limit to stay on track to meet our FY06 OE goal. For the month of September, we stand at 321 category A/B operational errors with 11 reporting days left in the fiscal year. At the current pace, we would expect to surpass our 329 goal approximately September 25.

For this reporting period (09/15/06 – 09/20/06), there were 11 overall operational errors reported. Of those 11, there were 6 category B errors related to the following factors:

1. **Category B error at PCT due to** inadequate judgment when descending a faster

aircraft over the top of a slower aircraft below

2. Category B error at CVG due to failure to follow local procedures on departure headings
3. Category B error at BNA due to failure to recognize converging traffic
4. Category B error at D21 due to failure to separate overtaking aircraft on final
5. Category B error at C90 due to inadequate radar vectors on departure headings
6. Category B error at TUL due to lack of positive control during climb/descent

In an effort to assist facilities with their operational error reduction plans, ATO-T has developed and implemented Terminal Radar Air Traffic Control Refresher training. Radar refresher training focuses on terminal radar air traffic control. Specifically, this training places emphasis on review of the basic ATC rules and procedures that enable terminal radar controllers to safely and effectively perform their jobs. Many of the operational errors that occur in the system are the result of misapplication of fundamental air traffic control procedures. By re-focusing on the “basics” of radar ATC, we should be able to reduce the number of these fundamental errors and move closer towards reaching our performance goals. The course has been distributed to the 14 busiest radar air traffic facilities in the country. The course is scheduled to be distributed to the next 6 busiest facilities in October. An aggressive training schedule, which commenced in August, has been implemented. Currently 225 controllers have completed the course and training is ongoing.

### Employee Focus

Working in Program Operations’ Automation sector, Sheryl Mears is our project lead on the Terminal Automation Modernization/Replacement (TAMR) program. Her write-up below gives insight into her contributions in government service and some fascinating glimpses into her life outside work.

*I joined the federal workforce in 1979 working for the Department of Defense in Personnel Management. In 1982, I was selected for an*

*Internship Program in acquisitions as a contract specialist, responsible for acquiring mapping and charting equipment for the Defense Mapping Agency.*

*I accepted a position as a contracting officer with the U.S. Mint in 1987. During my five years with the Mint, I was responsible for procuring a variety of products, ranging from coining machines, to special packing for commemorative coins, to gold...yes, newly mined, 0.9995 fine gold.*

*I joined the FAA in 1992 as a contracting officer assigned to the ARSR-4 Program. I served as a contracting officer on many surveillance and weather programs until 1997, when I accepted a position as a business manager in the Surveillance Directorate. I successfully completed the Executive Potential Program in 1997.*

*Shortly thereafter, I was appointed as the program lead for the LRR Program where I led the program team in accomplishing various efforts to improve the LRR system performance and facility infrastructure. After 9/11, I represented the Surveillance Directorate on a multi-agency Council to identify initiatives that the agencies could pursue to improve national security through surveillance products. Two years later, I was assigned as the program lead for the ASR-9 Sustainment Program, leading the team in successfully developing business cases and obtaining two final investment decisions from the JRC over a 15 month period. Since November 2005, I have been serving as the project lead for the Terminal Automation Modernization/Replacement Program. This has been a very challenging and interesting assignment with constant monitoring by the OIG and Congress. I am also currently serving as the Service Unit’s representative to the Earned Value Management (EVM) Council.*

*My husband and I will celebrate our 25th anniversary next March. Both of us were born in Washington, DC and have lived in the suburbs of Maryland all of our lives. We now call Southern Maryland home. While we have no children, we have five cats that we spoil rotten. We also spend a lot of time with our 13 nieces and nephews, who range in age from 3*

*to 24. So their diverse and ever-changing interests keep us on our toes. We also spend a lot of time drag racing - we own a race car that we run at our local track on the weekends and are anxiously awaiting the delivery of our new dragster.*

*Growing up with four brothers certainly had a strong influence on my personal interests. I love all kinds of sports and played softball, basketball and soccer on community and school teams while growing up, earning a varsity letter in basketball. I especially love auto racing (yes, it IS a sport) and either watch or attend every NASCAR race during the season.*

*While still in high school, I joined a volunteer fire department and obtained my Maryland firefighters and EMT certifications – not to mention the many rewarding and heartbreaking experiences I gained during my years with the department. I now teach CPR classes at our community center. I also participate in fund raising activities for the American Diabetes Association and am a volunteer for the Children's Aid Society in our community.*

### Model Workplace

### What's Your Story?

Dear Terminal Managers,

Yesterday I took the FAA's Employee Attitude Survey. I'm glad to report this employee's attitude is positive. Overall, I see many promising developments in the way you are leading in Terminal Services.

When it comes to what you can do better, I'd ask you to take a fresh look at ATO's Strategic Objective 1.8: "Enhance employee commitment through effective leadership." I think we have a ways to go on this one. Giving clear direction is one thing, but generating commitment is quite another. One requires compliance, but the other elicits enrollment. The one may require good supervisory skills, but the other takes leadership.

So here's my proposition for you on this subject: Managers can't enhance commitment without telling stories that inspire commitment.

For example, the ATO Strategy Map tells a story about ATO and its future. For those of you managing at the various levels and workplaces of Terminal Services, the challenge is to take this story and make it locally relevant:

- Where does the work your unit performs link up with the 4 pathways? Can you make these connections vivid for others?
- What innovations can your unit implement to get us further down the road?
- Why would I as an employee want to be part of these changes?

If you can come up with a story that answers these questions for your employees, you'll be better equipped to meet objective 1.8.

And please don't wait on your own manager to give you a revelation from on high. I think we need leaders who can generate their own sense of inspiration. For starters, you need a compelling story for yourself about the ATO and your place in it. Then, no matter what level manager you may be, I believe it is up to you to translate the ATO's vision, strategies, and values into a narrative that generates commitment among your employees.

Thanks for listening,  
Viscount Thurston

### REMINDERS

### Security Awareness Training: (due by September 30, 2006)

FAA Order 1600.69B requires annual facility security awareness briefings for all employees assigned to FAA facilities. This requirement can be met by taking the ASH SAVI electronic briefing. COTR's may require FAA contractors to complete the course where it makes sense to do so. ASH would encourage this course particularly when contractors share

FAA workspace or visit FAA facilities regularly.

#### ATO Federal Employees:

Annual training requirements are for both ISS SAVI and the ASH SAVI.

For the ISS SAVI training, there are two options for federal employees: one option is to take the training at [www.savi.faa.gov](http://www.savi.faa.gov) (please provide a copy of your completion certificate to your learning coordinator) and the other option is to take the ATO ISS training on the eLMS website (course # 01014). eLMS will automatically record your ATO ISS training on your learning plan.

#### ASH SAVI training website:

<https://ash.savi.faa.gov> Please provide a copy of your completion certificate to your learning coordinator.

ATO Contractors: ATO ISS training is required. Please go to:  
<http://intranet.faa.gov/faaemployees/org/linebusiness/ato%5Fonline/ato%5Fissp/issp%5Fcertification/educ%5Faware/media/index.htm>

Please fax a copy of your completion certificate to Brenda.Pinnix@faa.gov and provide a copy to your learning coordinator.

ASH SAVI - Contractors may take this course when required by their COTR, however ASH encourages all contractors to participate.

#### Extension for Privacy Awareness Training

The deadline to complete Privacy Awareness training has been extended to the last business day of the calendar year – December 29, 2006.

The broadcast message on this training was sent on August 4, 2006. The course should already be listed on your learning plan in eLMS and ready for you to launch the training.

If not, please review this website:  
<http://www.dot.gov/privacy/training.html>

#### CruArt Compliance Helpful Hint

(Source: Christine Hoffman)

Sick and Annual Leave hours need to be coded in CruArt in 15 minute increments. If it is not recorded in 15 minute increments, Castle will change the leave hours to the nearest 15 minute mark. This results in unbalanced LDR and T&A leave data, processing of LDR ceases in CASTLE and all LDR data charges to “no project”.

– Example: If an employee is scheduled for annual leave at 2:00 pm and they sign out at 2:12, they need to manually change the time they are signing out from 2:12 to 2:15.

- Fix: On the sign out screen in CruArt, the employee may Accept or Change the time. The employee should change the time to a 15 minute increment (note: you may only sign out 15 minutes into the future). Employees are not able to stay past the end of their shift unless the manager signs a TOS.

- Alternate Fix: The timekeepers should review the timecards daily and make any corrections to the sick or annual leave that are coded incorrectly.

- System Fix: There are discussions about putting a business rule in Cru-Art that would inform the employee to sign out in 15 minute increments.

NOTE: There is an ART Resource Center web page which contains a link to a document of known issues and the workarounds for each problem. The link to this site is:  
<http://cru-x.faa.gov/ART/>

#### Available Sources of Information

##### Via EMAIL

*This Week in Terminal* (weekly on Fridays)  
FAA broadcast email messages (variety of subjects from AOA-1, ATO-1, etc)  
ATO Leaders Report (sent out to ATO managers bi-weekly and linked to ATO-Online)

##### WEBSITES



ATO Online (<http://ato.faa.gov/>) (with links to other FAA sites)  
 FAA employee site (<http://employees.faa.gov>)  
 ATO Today (one pager updated daily linked to ATO-Online)  
 Employee Express  
 ([www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov))  
 Focus FAA  
 (<http://employees.faa.gov/news/focusfaa/>) (bi-weekly online magazine for all FAA employees)

#### **PHONE NUMBERS**

1-800-FAA-News (weekly phone number from Russ and ATO VP's)

#### **NBC Payroll Hotline**

With the Department of Transportation's (DOT) successful migration of our payroll system and services to the Department of Interior's National Business Center (NBC) in Denver, Colorado, the process for employees to request assistance with payroll matters has changed. As a reminder, if you have any questions concerning your pay or leave (e.g., salary payment, leave balance, savings bonds, W-2 address, electronic direct deposit to your bank account, special allotments, tax withholding, deductions for benefits, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), payroll debts, etc.) your point of contact is the NBC Payroll Hotline at 1-800-662-4324. The hotline is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

NBC's Payroll Hotline staff is committed to responding to your questions within 24 hours of your initial contact. They may not be able to solve your problem or answer your question in that time frame, but they will contact you and indicate how and when they expect to answer your question. In some cases, questions or issues may require additional research or other efforts to resolve satisfactorily.

NBC is committed to resolving payroll concerns in a timely fashion and has an internal tracking system for all calls they receive. They also have their own internal process for escalating calls if you do not receive a satisfactory response. The DOT Office of Financial Management continually monitors reports from NBC's system to ensure

that DOT employees receive timely, high quality service from NBC.

Sincerely,

Bruce Johnson, VP  
 ATO-Terminal Services